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AUTHOR	Fraser, Andy
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ABSTRACT

Te reo kori, a combination of movement, music, language, and Maori cultural values, was to be integrated into the new health and physical education (HPE) curriculum in New Zealand as one of the seven key areas of learning. However, the 1998 draft curriculum relegated it to one of the "considerations" for the implementation of the curriculum. This changed its status from a required content area to an optional one, and constitutes a failure to meet the needs and aspirations of Maori as guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi. Te reo kori has tremendous potential in its ability to fulfill cultural identity needs and feelings of self-worth in Maori students; meet the requirements of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework with regard to cultural inclusiveness; and achieve learning outcomes that address the four underlying concepts, four strands, and seven key areas of learning identified in the HPE curriculum. Te reo kori occurs in a cooperative setting, and research has identified numerous positive outcomes from cooperative learning approaches, including increases in conceptual achievement, critical and higher-order thinking skills, self-esteem, and positive attitudes towards cultural and racial diversity. New Zealand teachers use direct instructional approaches and identify te reo kori as the content area they are least comfortable teaching. Recommendations include extensive teacher training workshops in te reo kori and the creation of a Maori committee to ensure that te reo kori developments are culturally appropriate, relevant, and meaningful, and comply with Kaupapa Maori principles. (Contains 13 references.) (TD)

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Indigenous Movement in Physical Education:

Important or not?

Andy Fraser

Wellington College of Education

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Introduction

New Zealand has long been regarded internationally as a society which has embraced biculturalism and is well along the path to multiculturalism. An example of this was the introduction of Taha Māori initiatives (Māori dimensions of schooling considered appropriate for all students, Māori and non-Māori) during the 1980's. Although these initiatives have lost momentum in recent years due to recognition that what was deemed 'appropriate' tended to have been defined by non-Māori rather than by Māori, commitment to biculturalism is still evident in many areas. Salter (1998) suggests both the identification of a Māori dimension of movement in the 1987 physical education syllabus (Department of Education, 1987) and the integration of Māori and Western perspectives of health in the new HPE (Health and Physical Education) curriculum (Ministry of education, 1999) as two prominent examples in physical education.

In 1998 over 96% of Māori children of primary school age were now in mainstream (state, or non-Māori medium) education (Māori Education Commission, 1999). This has important implications for the education of Māori with regard to Salter's (1998; p. 20) comments:

> ... migration of Māori from traditional tribal areas to urban areas in search of work in the economic growth period of the 1960's and 1970's, has resulted in perhaps 80% of the New Zealand Māori population now living distant to, and often alienated from, their tribal origins ... there is no doubt that large numbers of Māori today do not have access to the *kaupapa*, to the *tikanga*, or to traditional cultural values.

As well as this obvious population of Māori who are geographically distant from their heritage, Salter goes on to suggest that many Māori students in mainstream education are culturally distanced from their roots. In this paper I explore the potential role of te reo kori in addressing these concerns, in terms of:

- fulfilling cultural identity needs and self-worth of Māori students
- teaching and learning strategies for effective teaching
- meeting the criteria of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993)
- meeting the criteria of the HPE curriculum with regard to:

  ~ the four **underlying concepts** ('Hauora', 'Health Promotion', 'Socio-ecological perspective', and 'Attitudes and Values')

  ~ the four **strands** ('Personal Health & Physical Development', 'Movement Concepts & Motor Skills', 'Relationships with Other People', and 'Healthy Communities & Environments'

  ~ the seven **Key areas of Learning** ('Mental Health', 'Sexuality Education', 'Food and Nutrition', 'Body Care and Physical Safety', 'Physical Activity', 'Sport Studies', and 'Outdoor education'

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Te reo kori in context

The following account of the way te reo kori developed in the HPE curriculum is drawn largely from the work of Salter (1998). Throughout the process of writing the HPE Curriculum, te reo kori was identified as one of seven key areas of learning, along with mental health, food and nutrition, sexuality (education),

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physical activity, education through sport (sport studies), and outdoor education. At a hui in Auckland in August 1997, some 70 leaders in health, home economics and physical education 'put the finishing touches' to the curriculum ready for approval by the Ministry of Education, and subsequent distribution to schools.

The description of te reo kori in this version acknowledged the bicultural nature of New Zealand, and identified the importance of providing opportunities for non-Māori students to access the culture and knowledge that is specific to the tangata whenua. It also provided opportunities for Māori students to access traditional practices, values and knowledge, in the context of mainstream education. Te reo kori was described as combining aspects of movement, music, language and Māori cultural values, in a way that would encourage students to:

1) develop movement skills through a range of Māori activities,

2) develop an appreciation of Māori cultural values, and

3) use and practise the Māori language.

It was suggested that these movement skills might be developed in the contexts of:

poi - ball on a string *haka* - ritualistic dance

whai - string games *tākaro-ā- ringa* - hand games

tītītōria - short sticks *tira* - long wand

koikoi and *taiaha* - weaponry *kori tinana* - exercise

kanikani - creative dance *waiata-ā-ringa* - action song

As Salter (1998) reported, the key points in the description of te reo kori in this version of the curriculum were:

> a) te reo kori is movement, involving learning experiences derived from traditional Māori cultural practices. While their origin is specific to Māori and the activities are likely to affirm Māori students, their application is also intended to be inclusive of and appropriate for all,
>
> b) these learning experiences may be adapted to contemporary educational settings. Te reo kori is about mastery of basic Māori movement, not rigid duplication of traditional cultural performance (see for example Walker, 1995; p.22),
>
> c) inclusion of te reo kori affirms the status and culture of the tangata whenua. Notions of partnership and equity are embodied both in the Treaty of Waitangi, and in the New Zealand Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, 1993; p.7).

This precise identification of the nature and purposes of te reo kori in a school setting was endorsed by those attending the hui, yet the subsequent official Draft Curriculum released to schools for trial early in 1998 no longer identified te reo kori as a key area of learning. Instead, a small passage in the "Cultural Inclusiveness" sub-section of "The Needs of Learners" described te reo kori as:

> ... the study of movement through situations specific to Māori, using Māori language and exploring Māori concepts and values. It provides an opportunity for students to experience, and develop an understanding of, aspects of the tangata whenua. Through its integrated nature, te reo kori supports the concept of total well-being / hauora.

(Ministry of Education, 1997; p.18).

Te reo kori was thus relegated from its position as a key area of learning, to one of several (albeit

important) considerations for the implementation of health and physical education programmes. Salter (1998) argued that schools are required to teach content from each of the key areas of learning, and the removal of te reo kori from the category of 'key area of learning' was likely to result in many teachers affording it a low status, and possibly avoiding teaching it at all. This removal did not reflect the expressed intentions of the document with regard to cultural equity, and Salter went on to suggest that it disadvantaged both Māori and non-Māori as te reo kori has value to all students regardless of cultural origins, and it is the right of non-Māori students also to access the knowledge base of the tangata whenua. Clearly there are implications for cultural inequity at the level of curriculum implementation created by the marginalisation of te reo kori, as Salter (1998) argues.

Te reo kori as solution

Throughout the preceding discussion I have drawn from Salter's work in suggesting that te reo kori should be woven into the HPE curriculum, since it is inseparably linked with:

- the concept of Hauora
- the development of culturally appropriate attitudes and values
- developing a sense of identity and self-worth, and
- supporting Māori aspirations to retain a distinctive culture and identity while holding an equivalent status in society.

Currently there are sporadic examples of te reo kori activities included as learning contexts in the HPE curriculum, predominantly grouped in Strand B (Movement Concepts and Motor Skills), and related to the 'Physical Activity' key area of learning. This supposes that te reo kori is a discrete chunk of content, perhaps in the same way that gymnastics or swimming are generally considered. However, although many teachers probably approach te reo kori programmes in their classrooms in this way, I have argued above that te reo kori is far more than just movement activities. Te reo kori occurs in co-operative settings, and Salter (1999a) maintains that children who learn co-operatively as opposed to competitively and individually feel better about themselves and work more effectively with each other. He cites the work of Slavin (1987) and Vermette (1987) for example, who argue for a number of positive outcomes from a co-operative learning approach, such as:

- an increase in conceptual achievement
- an increase in the use of critical thinking and higher order thinking skills
- an increase in individual self esteem
- an increase in positive attitude toward those who are culturally or racially different.

Salter (1999a) proposes that the process of teaching and learning in te reo kori should be regarded as that of "move, create and share", rather than that of "teach, practise and perform". Walker (1995: p.22) for example suggests that Te reo kori should be about:

> ....mastery of basic Maori movement, not about performance of treasured taonga. It is about helping and being helped, about whānau, where tuakana (elder, or more experienced) accept responsibility for teina (younger, or less experienced), where ownership of learning can be achieved by every student.

As I have suggested above and Salter (1998) has previously argued, the performing of fundamental Maori movement in te reo kori assumes much greater significance than the simple act of executing skills - it can be a way for Maori students to access the tikanga directly, and a way of helping to create and restore balance and harmony for the individual. The potential role of te reo kori should not be underestimated in this regard, and its inclusion in school physical education programmes clearly holds the potential for both Maori and non-Maori students to achieve many of the personal and social learning

outcomes specified in the new curriculum document. Te reo kori might be regarded metaphorically as a whāriki interweaving all the threads of the new HPE curriculum, including the four underlying concepts, the four strands, the seven key areas of learning, and the achievement objectives (see Salter, 1999a).

The 'Key Areas of Learning' reflect and address the current health and physical education needs of both Māori and non-Māori students, and it is expected that they will be revisited at different levels and in different learning contexts. I believe it is vital that te reo kori is taught well, since it is through this context that a deep and authentic understanding of hauora can be developed in all learners. Below I have selected achievement objectives at level 4 (about years 7/8) from the HPE curriculum (p. 65), to illustrate how te reo kori may be used to address learning across the four strands.

Strand A: Personal health and physical development

A1. describe the characteristics ofpubertal change and discuss positive adjustment strategies:

for example, exploration of tikanga associated with participation in various activities, such as tapu situations including 'male/female' activities, menstruation, etc.

A2. demonstrate an increased sense of responsibility for participating in regular enjoyable physical activity to maintain well-being:

for example, development of specific te reo kori skills linking the physical, spiritual and tikanga dimensions of hauora.

A3 access and use information to make and action safe choices in a range of contexts:

for example, cultural safety in relation to body stance, and to use of implements/weapons with their own mana and whakapapa, such as poi, rakau etc.

A4. describe how social messages and stereotypes, including those in the media, can affect our feelings of self-worth:

for example, sensitivity to different abilities, response to tuakana-teina relationships, influence of kapa haka/cultural performance stereotypes on te reo kori activities.

Strand B: Movement concepts and motor skills

B1. demonstrate consistency and control of movement in a range of situations:

for example, when performing specific te reo kori skills such as waiata ā ringa, poi, rakau, tūtōria, kanikani, *etc.*

B2. demonstrate willingness to accept challenges, learn new skills, and extend abilities in movement-related activities:

for example, through developing and performing/sharing movement sequences comprising

te reo kori activities such as poi, rakau, etc.

B3. experience and demonstrate how science, technology and the environment influence the selection and use of equipment in a variety of settings:

for example, making poi with contemporary and traditional materials, conservation of harakeke, cultural aspects/tikanga of making, storing and taking care of poi.

B4. experience ways in which cultural and social practices are expressed through the ritual of movement, demonstrate understanding of this and learn skills of a range of cultural activities:

for example, use of waiata and haka in various settings/contexts, such as for a pōwhiri, on the marae, etc.

Strand C: Relationships with other people

C1. identify the effects of changing situations, roles and responsibilities on relationships, and describe appropriate responses:

for example, leadership roles in te reo kori situations related to whānau groupings, siblings, tuakana-teina relationships, manaakitanga, etc.

C2. recognise instances of discrimination and act responsibly to support their own rights and feelings and those of other people:

for example, understanding gender stereotyping and gender roles & responsibilities from a Māori perspective, through Mana Tane/Mana Wahine balance in te reo kori activities.

C3. describe and demonstrate a range of assertive communication skills and processes that enable them to interact appropriately with other people:

for example, when participating in te reo kori group movement sequences, using cooperative and collaborative processes involving negotiation, mediation and supporting others.

Strand D: Healthy communities and environments

D1. investigate and describe lifestyle factors and media influences that contribute to common health problems across the lifespan of people in New Zealand:

for example, exploring gender expectations & lifespan changes from a Māori perspective, Mana Tane/Mana Wahine balance, tikanga & kawa of hauora through te reo kori.

D2. access a range of health care agencies, recreational resources and sporting resources and evaluate the contribution made by each to the well-being of community members:

for example, opportunities to take part in te reo kori activities in various settings/contexts, such as a pōwhiri, on the marae, cultural activities in the local community, etc.

D3. specify individual responsibilities and take collective action for the care and safety of other people in their school and in the wider community:

for example, culturally specific perspectives of care and safety gained through te reo kori, applied to other settings and contexts such as school, community and the environment.

These examples of how te reo kori may address learning across the strands are by no means exhaustive, but rather serve as illustrations which support Salter's (1998; p. 19) claim that te reo kori can provide a " ... comprehensive example of learning activities which encompass all four learning strands" of the HPE curriculum. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the ways that te reo kori might be used as a learning context to achieve learning outcomes within all the key areas of learning, though this would be a straightforward task. It is clear however as Salter (1999b) suggests, that in teaching physical education with the intention of achieving learning outcomes beyond the physical, te reo kori offers a unique

vehicle to reflect and address the current health and physical education needs of all students in each of the key areas of learning:

- Mental Health
- Sexuality Education
- Food and Nutrition
- Body Care and Physical Safety
- Physical Activity
- Sport Studies
- Outdoor Education.

Conclusion

In this paper I have suggested that there are generic problems for the education of Māori in the New Zealand state system in its failure to meet the needs and aspirations of Māori as guaranteed in the Treaty of Waitangi. As a solution to these problems, I have proposed that te reo kori has tremendous potential in its ability to:

- fulfil cultural identity needs and feelings of self-worth of Māori students
- meet the requirements of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework with regard to cultural inclusiveness
- meet the expressed intentions of the HPE curriculum with regard to achieving learning outcomes which address the four underlying concepts ('Hauora', 'Health Promotion', 'a Socio-ecological perspective', and 'Attitudes and Values'); the four strands; and the seven Key areas of Learning.

The process of up-skilling practising teachers and creating sufficient space in pre-service teacher education programmes to enable beginning teachers to learn to implement effective te reo kori initiatives in the ways I have suggested above is not without difficulty. As Salter (1995) has argued, New Zealand teachers tend to be comfortable using direct instructional approaches, and transmitting information and skills of content areas in which they feel competent, though the HPE curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999; p.24) suggests that quality teaching will always involve teachers in:

- using a wide range of student-centred learning processes characterised by interactive and co-operative learning strategies
- encouraging students to explore options and consequences and assisting them to make informed decisions
- promoting individual and group responsibility for learning.

Salter (1995; p.209) identifies te reo kori as the content area teachers are least comfortable teaching, and Walker (1995; p.22) suggests that their confusion and discomfort derives from stereotypes of traditional Māori performing arts, and a fear of contravening cultural propriety. Teaching te reo kori in schools should involve basic movement patterns and skills, rather than the attempted rigid duplication of traditional cultural performance. As well as teachers' customary inertia in moving beyond their comfort zones, the demise of the Head Office of the Department of Education in 1988 (see Stothart, 1991) also adversely affected teachers' ability to re-conceptualise their practices to accommodate new ideas and 'new' teaching approaches. Few in-service offerings of te reo kori workshops occurred over the following 10 years, other than by those conducted by three physical education advisers (Ralph Walker,

Andy Fraser and Alice Derbridge). PENZ (Physical Education New Zealand) has recently embraced its professional responsibilities to bicultural education, and as well as actively advocating Māori initiatives has promoted a series of te reo kori workshops throughout the country and more recently embarked on a programme aimed at 'training the trainers' of te reo kori. To support the on-going 'solution' to the 'problems' explored in this paper, I make the following two suggestions:

1. the extensive use of PENZ in delivering courses and workshops throughout New Zealand, and in developing resources to encourage and support teachers of te reo kori

1. the convening of some sort of Māori education committee with the power and responsibility to oversee te reo kori developments, and to ensure that such developments are culturally appropriate, relevant and meaningful, and comply with Kaupapa Māori principles.

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